


# Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) Issues Guidance Around Masks

## Delawareans should wear cloth face coverings in public settings where maintaining social distancing is difficult

WILMINGTON, Del. – Consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), the Division of Public Health (DPH) [recommended](#) on Wednesday that Delawareans should wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Those settings include grocery stores and pharmacies.

Wednesday's [guidance](#) from DPH is for the use of cloth face  coverings only. **The primary purpose of wearing a cloth face covering is not to protect yourself – it is to protect others.** Members of the general public are not recommended to wear medical or surgical masks, which should be reserved as personal protective equipment for health care workers. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand, or can be improvised from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.

[Read the full DPH guidance document around masks.](#)

“Delaware’s response to COVID-19 has been driven by science, and will continue to be driven by science,” said **Governor John Carney**. “Our goal is simple. We are working to prevent a surge in cases, protect hospital capacity, and save lives. The science tells us that wearing a face covering in certain

public settings can help prevent transmission and spread of the COVID-19 virus. But wearing a face covering is not an excuse to spend more time in public. Stay home. Don't go out in public unnecessarily. Wash your hands. Disinfect surfaces frequently. It's important we all do our part to get through this."

Delawareans who wear a cloth face covering should practice strict hand-washing before and after touching the face covering, according to the DPH guidance. Face coverings are not a replacement for washing hands, practicing physical distancing, and staying home.

Delawareans who are sick should wear a cloth face covering over their nose and mouth if they must be around other people – even while at home, according to the DPH guidance.

"Wearing a face covering is not a substitute for existing guidance around hand-washing and social distancing," said **Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of the Delaware Division of Public Health**. "Delawareans should stay at home whenever possible, only leaving for essential activities. Wash your hands. Keep 6-10 feet between yourself and others. In public settings like grocery stores, where social distancing is difficult, we are recommending that Delawareans wear cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19."

*Delawareans with general questions about COVID-19 can call the Delaware Coronavirus Call Center at 211, or 711 for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Questions can also be submitted by email at [DPHCall@delaware.gov](mailto:DPHCall@delaware.gov). DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, visit [de.gov/coronavirus](https://de.gov/coronavirus).*

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